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10 September 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 9 September 1958 COBAT Meeting

1. Mr. Henry Loomis chaired the subject meeting. He stated that his main concern was the future role of COBAT and TPIB. His questions were: (1) Should COBAT exist? (2) Should it be merged with TPIB? He spoke of a larger TPIB where policy and technical implications of radio broadcasting problems might be discussed. At this point, Mr. McFadden, State Department, and I reminded Mr. Loomis of the role of the Radio Policy Committee and of NSC 5412. Mr. Loomis stated that he believed the Radio Policy Committee was concerned only with the content of US international broadcasting to the Sovbloc. It was pointed out that the Radio Policy Committee is suitably organized to give attention to other aspects of broadcasting to the Sovbloc, as well as US broadcasting to the Middle East, and has done so. We reminded Mr. Loomis that with the advent of the Radio Policy Committee, the Committee on Broadcasting and Television (COBAT) actually became a Committee on Television. Mr. Loomis said that television was not his concern, but that he would certainly not oppose the continuation of COBAT as a TV forum. He remarked that USIA TV was now completely separate from VOA, and that should COBAT continue as a TV forum he would not attend COBAT meetings.

2. Mr. Loomis explained that he was very concerned with the lack of coordinated government planning and action with regard to Iran and similar issues. He stated that the US Government should have considered Iranian broadcasting long ago and not neglected the problem until it became critical. In similar context, he referred to the Army transmitter which has recently been placed in Lebanon, and stated that this project could have been far better handled had there been coordinated US Government action. (Apparently Mr. Loomis is not aware that this matter was handled by Clyde Dunn after meetings in his office with representatives of CIA and State NE.)

3. Mr. Hunt Damon of OCB remarked that there is team coordination in the field and others referred Mr. Loomis to the adequacy in many instances of usual inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

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4. It is my impression that after the above discussion Mr. Loomis altered his thinking about a merger of COBAT and TPIB and the role of the Radio Policy Committee. He recommended that [REDACTED] and Hunt Damon prepare an OCB Staff study which would suggest the responsibilities of each Committee (COBAT, TPIB and the Radio Policy Committee). He suggested that the Iranian problem be used as a case in point. [REDACTED] and Mr. Damon will prepare an OCB Staff Study.

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